DESCRIPTION

NOVEL *BACILLUS THURINGIENSIS* ISOLATE ACTIVE AGAINST LEPIDOPTERAN PESTS, AND GENES ENCODING NOVEL LEPIDOPTERAN-ACTIVE TOXINS

Cross-Reference to a Related Application

This is a divisional of application Serial No. 09/521,344, filed March 9, 2000, now U.S. Patent 6573240; which is a divisional of application Serial No. 08/933,891, filed September 19, 1997, now U.S. Patent No. 6,096,708; which is a continuation of application Serial No. 08/356,034, filed December 14, 1994, now U.S. Patent No. 5,691,308; which is a continuation of Serial No. 08/210,110, filed March 17, 1994, now abandoned; which is a continuation of Serial No. 07/865,168, filed April 9, 1992, now abandoned; which is a division of Serial No. 07/451,261, filed December 14, 1989, now U.S. Patent No. 5,188,960; which is a continuation-in-part of Serial No. 371,955, filed June 27, 1989, now U.S. Patent No. 5,126,133.

Background of the Invention

The most widely used microbial pesticides are derived from the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis. This bacterial agent is used to control a wide range of leaf-eating caterpillars and beetles, as well as mosquitos. Bacillus thuringiensis produces a proteinaceous parasporal body or crystal which is toxic upon ingestion by a susceptible insect host. For example, B. thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki HD-1 produces a crystal inclusion consisting of a biotoxin called a delta toxin which is toxic to the larvae of a number of lepidopteran insects. The cloning, sequencing, and expression of this B.t. crystal protein gene in Escherichia coli has been described in the published literature (Schnepf, H.E. and Whitely, H.R. [1981] Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 78:2893-2897; Schnepf et al.). U.S. Patent 4,448,885 and U.S. Patent 4,467,036 both disclose the expression of B.t. crystal protein in E. coli.

Brief Summary of the Invention

The subject invention concerns a novel Bacillus thuringiensis isolate designated B.t. PS81I which has activity against all lepidopteran pests tested.

Also disclosed and claimed are novel toxin genes which express toxins toxic to lepidopteran insects. These toxin genes can be transferred to suitable hosts via a plasmid vector.

Specifically, the invention comprises the novel B.t. isolate denoted B.t. PS81I, mutants thereof, and novel δ-endotoxin genes derived from this B.t. isolate which encode proteins which are active against lepidopteran pests.

Brief Description of the Sequences

SEQ ID NO:1 is the nucleotide sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin gene PS81IA2.

SEQ ID NO:2 is the amino acid sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin PS81IA2.

SEQ ID NO:3 is the nucleotide sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin gene PS81B.

SEQ ID NO:4 is the amino acid sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin PS81B.

SEQ ID NO:5 is the nucleotide sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin gene PS81IB2.

SEQ ID NO:6 is the amino acid sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin PS81IB2.

SEQ ID NO:7 is the nucleotide sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin gene PS81IA.

SEQ ID NO:8 is the amino acid sequence of the novel *B.t.* toxin PS81IA.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 – agarose gel electrophoresis of plasmid preparations from B.t. HD-1 and B.t. PS81I.

Detailed Disclosure of the Invention

The novel toxin genes of the subject invention were obtained from a novel lepidopteran-active B. thuringiensis (B.t.) isolate designated PS81I.

Characteristics of *B.t.* PS81I

Colony morphology -- Large colony, dull surface, typical B.t.

Vegetative cell morphology -- typical B.t.

Flagellar serotype -- 7, aizawai.

Intracellular inclusions -- sporulating cells produce a bipyramidal crystal.

Plasmid preparations--agarose gel electrophoresis of plasmid preparations distinguishing B.t. PS81I from B.t. HD-1. See Figure 1.

Alkali-soluble proteins -- SDS-PAGE analysis shows a protein band at ca. 130,000 daltons.

Unique toxins -- four unique toxins have been identified in B.t. PS81I.

Activity -- B.t. PS81I kills all Lepidoptera tested.

Bioassay procedures:

B.t. PS81I spores and crystals were tested against: Beet Armyworm, Spodoptera exigua; Diamondback Moth, Plutella xylostella; Western Spruce Budworm, Choristoneura occidentalis.

LC50 values were as follows:

Beet Armyworm – 2.53 ppm

Diamondback Moth – 0.16 ppm

Western Spruce Budworm – 3.2 ppm

Bioassay procedure: dilutions are prepared of a spore and crystal pellet, mixed with USDA Insect Diet (Technical Bulletin 1528, U.S. Department of Agriculture), and poured into small plastic trays. Larvae are placed on the diet mixture and held at 25°C (late 2nd instar Diamondback Moth larvae, early 2nd instar Beet Armyworm larvae, 4th instar Western Spruce Budworm larvae). Mortality is recorded after six days.

B. thuringiensis PS81I, NRRL B-18484, and mutants thereof, can be cultured using standard known media and fermentation techniques. Upon completion of the fermentation cycle, the bacteria can be harvested by first separating the B.t. spores and crystals from the fermentation broth by means well known in the art. The recovered B.t. spores and crystals can be formulated into a wettable powder, a liquid concentrate, granules or other

formulations by the addition of surfactants, dispersants, inert carriers and other components to facilitate handling and application for particular target pests. The formulation and application procedures are all well known in the art and are used with commercial strains of B. thuringiensis (HD-1) active against Lepidoptera, e.g., caterpillars. B.t. PS81I, and mutants thereof, can be used to control lepidopteran pests.

A subculture of B.t. PS81I and the E. coli hosts harboring the toxin genes of the invention, were deposited in the permanent collection of the Northern Research Laboratory, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Peoria, Illinois, USA. The accession numbers and deposit dates are as follows:

Subculture	Accession Number	Deposit Date
B.t. PS81I	NRRL B-18484	April 19, 1989
E. coli(NM522)(pMYC392)	NRRL B-18498	May 17, 1989
E. coli (NM522)(pMYC393)	NRRL B-18499	May 17, 1989
E. coli (NM522)(pMYC394)	NRRL B-18500	May 17, 1989
E. coli (NM522)(pMYC1603)	NRRL B-18517	June 30, 1989

The subject cultures have been deposited under conditions that assure that access to the cultures will be available during the pendency of this patent application to one determined by the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks to be entitled thereto under 37 CFR 1.14 and 35 USC 122. The deposits are available as required by foreign patent laws in countries wherein counterparts of the subject application, or its progeny, are filed. However, it should be understood that the availability of a deposit does not constitute a license to practice the subject invention in derogation of patent rights granted by governmental action.

Further, the subject culture deposits will be stored and made available to the public in accord with the provisions of the Budapest Treaty for the Deposit of Microorganisms, i.e., they will be stored with all the care necessary to keep them viable and uncontaminated for a period of at least five years after the most recent request for the furnishing of a sample of the deposit, and in any case, for a period of at least 30 (thirty) years after the date of deposit

or for the enforceable life of any patent which may issue disclosing the cultures. The depositor acknowledges the duty to replace the deposits should the depository be unable to furnish a sample when requested, due to the condition of the deposit(s). All restrictions on the availability to the public of the subject culture deposits will be irrevocably removed upon the granting of a patent disclosing them.

The toxin genes of the subject invention can be introduced into a wide variety of microbial hosts. Expression of the toxin gene results, directly or indirectly, in the intracellular production and maintenance of the pesticide. With suitable hosts, e.g., Pseudomonas, the microbes can be applied to the situs of lepidopteran insects where they will proliferate and be ingested by the insects. The result is a control of the unwanted insects. Alternatively, the microbe hosting the toxin gene can be treated under conditions that prolong the activity of the toxin produced in the cell. The treated cell then can be applied to the environment of target pest(s). The resulting product retains the toxicity of the B.t. toxin.

Where the B.t. toxin gene is introduced via a suitable vector into a microbial host, and said host is applied to the environment in a living state, it is essential that certain host microbes be used. Microorganism hosts are selected which are known to occupy the "phytosphere" (phylloplane, phyllosphere, rhizosphere, and/or rhizoplane) of one or more crops of interest. These microorganisms are selected so as to be capable of successfully competing in the particular environment (crop and other insect habitats) with the wild-type microorganisms, provide for stable maintenance and expression of the gene expressing the polypeptide pesticide, and, desirably, provide for improved protection of the pesticide from environmental degradation and inactivation.

A large number of microorganisms are known to inhabit the phylloplane (the surface of the plant leaves) and/or the rhizosphere (the soil surrounding plant roots) of a wide variety of important crops. These microorganisms include bacteria, algae, and fungi. Of particular interest are microorganisms, such as bacteria, e.g., genera Bacillus, Pseudomonas, Erwinia, Serratia, Klebsiella, Xanthomonas, Streptomyces, Rhizobium, Rhodopseudomonas, Methylophilius, Agrobacterium, Acetobacter, Lactobacillus, Arthrobacter, Azotobacter,

Leuconostoc, and Alcaligenes; fungi, particularly yeast, e.g., genera Saccharomyces, Cryptococcus, Kluyveromyces, Sporobolomyces, Rhodotorula, and Aureobasidium. Of particular interest are such phytosphere bacterial species as Pseudomonas syringae. Pseudomonas fluorescens, Serratia marcescens, Acetobacter xylinum, Agrobacterium tumefaciens, Rhodopseudomonas spheroides, Xanthomonas campestris, Rhizobium melioti, Alcaligenes entrophus, and Azotobacter vinlandii; and phytosphere yeast species such as Rhodotorula rubra, R. glutinis, R. marina, R. aurantiaca, Cryptococcus albidus, C. diffluens, C. laurentii, Saccharomyces rosei, S. pretoriensis, S. cerevisiae, Sporobolomyces roseus, S. odorus, Kluyveromyces veronae, and Aureobasidium pollulans. Of particular interest are the pigmented microorganisms.

A wide variety of ways are available for introducing a B.t. gene expressing a toxin into the microorganism host under conditions which allow for stable maintenance and expression of the gene. One can provide for DNA constructs which include the transcriptional and translational regulatory signals for expression of the toxin gene, the toxin gene under their regulatory control and a DNA sequence homologous with a sequence in the host organism, whereby integration will occur, and/or a replication system which is functional in the host, whereby integration or stable maintenance will occur.

The transcriptional initiation signals will include a promoter and a transcriptional initiation start site. In some instances, it may be desirable to provide for regulative expression of the toxin, where expression of the toxin will only occur after release into the environment. This can be achieved with operators or a region binding to an activator or enhancers, which are capable of induction upon a change in the physical or chemical environment of the microorganisms. For example, a temperature sensitive regulatory region may be employed, where the organisms may be grown up in the laboratory without expression of a toxin, but upon release into the environment, expression would begin. Other techniques may employ a specific nutrient medium in the laboratory, which inhibits the expression of the toxin, where the nutrient medium in the environment would allow for expression of the toxin. For translational initiation, a ribosomal binding site and an initiation codon will be present.

Various manipulations may be employed for enhancing the expression of the messenger RNA, particularly by using an active promoter, as well as by employing sequences, which enhance the stability of the messenger RNA. The transcriptional and translational termination region will involve stop codon(s), a terminator region, and optionally, a polyadenylation signal. A hydrophobic "leader" sequence may be employed at the amino terminus of the translated polypeptide sequence in order to promote secretion of the protein across the inner membrane.

In the direction of transcription, namely in the 5′ to 3′ direction of the coding or sense sequence, the construct will involve the transcriptional regulatory region, if any, and the promoter, where the regulatory region may be either 5′ or 3′ of the promoter, the ribosomal binding site, the initiation codon, the structural gene having an open reading frame in phase with the initiation codon, the stop codon(s), the polyadenylation signal sequence, if any, and the terminator region. This sequence as a double strand may be used by itself for transformation of a microorganism host, but will usually be included with a DNA sequence involving a marker, where the second DNA sequence may be joined to the toxin expression construct during introduction of the DNA into the host.

By a marker is intended a structural gene which provides for selection of those hosts which have been modified or transformed. The marker will normally provide for selective advantage, for example, providing for biocide resistance, e.g., resistance to antibiotics or heavy metals; complementation, so as to provide prototropy to an auxotrophic host, or the like. Preferably, complementation is employed, so that the modified host may not only be selected, but may also be competitive in the field. One or more markers may be employed in the development of the constructs, as well as for modifying the host. The organisms may be further modified by providing for a competitive advantage against other wild-type microorganisms in the field. For example, genes expressing metal chelating agents, e.g., siderophores, may be introduced into the host along with the structural gene expressing the toxin. In this manner, the enhanced expression of a siderophore may provide for a competitive advantage for the toxin-producing host, so that it may effectively compete with the wild-type microorganisms and stably occupy a niche in the environment.

Where no functional replication system is present, the construct will also include a sequence of at least 50 basepairs (bp), preferably at least about 100 bp, and usually not more than about 1000 bp of a sequence homologous with a sequence in the host. In this way, the probability of legitimate recombination is enhanced, so that the gene will be integrated into the host and stably maintained by the host. Desirably, the toxin gene will be in close proximity to the gene providing for complementation as well as the gene providing for the competitive advantage. Therefore, in the event that a toxin gene is lost, the resulting organism will be likely to also lose the complementing gene and/or the gene providing for the competitive advantage, so that it will be unable to compete in the environment with the gene retaining the intact construct.

A large number of transcriptional regulatory regions are available from a wide variety of microorganism hosts, such as bacteria, bacteriophage, cyanobacteria, algae, fungi, and the like. Various transcriptional regulatory regions include the regions associated with the trp gene, lac gene, gal gene, the lambda left and right promoters, the Tac promoter, the naturally-occurring promoters associated with the toxin gene, where functional in the host. See for example, U.S. Patent Nos. 4,332,898, 4,342,832 and 4,356,270. The termination region may be the termination region normally associated with the transcriptional initiation region or a different transcriptional initiation region, so long as the two regions are compatible and functional in the host.

Where stable episomal maintenance or integration is desired, a plasmid will be employed which has a replication system which is functional in the host. The replication system may be derived from the chromosome, an episomal element normally present in the host or a different host, or a replication system from a virus which is stable in the host. A large number of plasmids are available, such as pBR322, pACYC184, RSF1010, pRO1614, and the like. See for example, Olson et al., (1982) J. Bacteriol. 150:6069, and Bagdasarian et al., (1981) Gene 16:237, and U.S. Patent Nos. 4,356,270, 4,362,817, and 4,371,625.

The B.t. gene can be introduced between the transcriptional and translational initiation region and the transcriptional and translational termination region, so as to be under the regulatory control of the initiation region. This construct will be included in a plasmid,

which will include at least one replication system, but may include more than one, where one replication system is employed for cloning during the development of the plasmid and the second replication system is necessary for functioning in the ultimate host. In addition, one or more markers may be present, which have been described previously. Where integration is desired, the plasmid will desirably include a sequence homologous with the host genome.

The transformants can be isolated in accordance with conventional ways, usually employing a selection technique, which allows for selection of the desired organism as against unmodified organisms or transferring organisms, when present. The transformants then can be tested for pesticidal activity.

Suitable host cells, where the pesticide-containing cells will be treated to prolong the activity of the toxin in the cell when the then treated cell is applied to the environment of target pest(s), may include either prokaryotes or eukaryotes, normally being limited to those cells which do not produce substances toxic to higher organisms, such as mammals. However, organisms which produce substances toxic to higher organisms could be used, where the toxin is unstable or the level of application sufficiently low as to avoid any possibility of toxicity to a mammalian host. As hosts, of particular interest will be the prokaryotes and the lower eukaryotes, such as fungi. Illustrative prokaryotes, both Gram-negative and -positive, include Enterobacteriaceae, such as Escherichia, Erwinia, Shigella, Salmonella, and Proteus; Bacillaceae; Rhizobiceae, such as Rhizobium; Spirillaceae, such as photobacterium, Zymomonas, Serratia, Aeromonas, Vibrio, Desulfovibrio, Spirillum; Lactobacillaceae; Pseudomonadaceae, such as Pseudomonas and Acetobacter; Azotobacteraceae, Actinomycetales, and Nitrobacteraceae. Among eukaryotes are fungi, such as Phycomycetes and Ascomycetes, which includes yeast, such as Saccharomyces and Schizosaccharomyces; and Basidiomycetes yeast, such as Rhodotorula, Aureobasidium, Sporobolomyces, and the like.

Characteristics of particular interest in selecting a host cell for purposes of production include ease of introducing the B.t. gene into the host, availability of expression systems, efficiency of expression, stability of the pesticide in the host, and the presence of auxiliary genetic capabilities. Characteristics of interest for use as a pesticide microcapsule include

protective qualities for the pesticide, such as thick cell walls, pigmentation, and intracellular packaging or formation of inclusion bodies; leaf affinity; lack of mammalian toxicity; attractiveness to pests for ingestion; ease of killing and fixing without damage to the toxin; and the like. Other considerations include ease of formulation and handling, economics, storage stability, and the like.

Host organisms of particular interest include yeast, such as Rhodotorula sp., Aureobasidium sp., Saccharomyces sp., and Sporobolomyces sp.; phylloplane organisms such as Pseudomonas sp., Erwinia sp. and Flavobacterium sp.; or such other organisms as Escherichia, Lactobacillus sp., Bacillus sp., Streptomyces sp., and the like. Specific organisms include Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Pseudomonas fluorescens, Saccharomyces cerevisiae, Bacillus thuringiensis, Escherichia coli, Bacillus subtilis, Streptomyces lividans and the like.

The cell will usually be intact and be substantially in the proliferative form when treated, rather than in a spore form, although in some instances spores may be employed.

Treatment of the microbial cell, e.g., a microbe containing the B.t. toxin gene, can be by chemical or physical means, or by a combination of chemical and/or physical means, so long as the technique does not deleteriously affect the properties of the toxin, nor diminish the cellular capability in protecting the toxin. Examples of chemical reagents are halogenating agents, particularly halogens of atomic no. 17-80. More particularly, iodine can be used under mild conditions and for sufficient time to achieve the desired results. Other suitable techniques include treatment with aldehydes, such as formaldehyde and glutaraldehyde; anti-infectives, such as zephiran chloride and cetylpyridinium chloride; alcohols, such as isopropyl and ethanol; various histologic fixatives, such as Lugol iodine, Bouin's fixative, and Helly's fixative (See: Humason, Gretchen L., Animal Tissue Techniques, W.H. Freeman and Company, 1967); or a combination of physical (heat) and chemical agents that preserve and prolong the activity of the toxin produced in the cell when the cell is administered to the host animal. Examples of physical means are short wavelength radiation such as gamma-radiation and X-radiation, freezing, UV irradiation, lyophilization, and the like.

The cells generally will have enhanced structural stability which will enhance resistance to environmental conditions. Where the pesticide is in a proform, the method of inactivation should be selected so as not to inhibit processing of the proform to the mature form of the pesticide by the target pest pathogen. For example, formaldehyde will crosslink proteins and could inhibit processing of the proform of a polypeptide pesticide. The method of inactivation or killing retains at least a substantial portion of the bio-availability or bioactivity of the toxin.

The cellular host containing the B.t. insecticidal gene may be grown in any convenient nutrient medium, where the DNA construct provides a selective advantage, providing for a selective medium so that substantially all or all of the cells retain the B.t. gene. These cells may then be harvested in accordance with conventional ways. Alternatively, the cells can be treated prior to harvesting.

The B.t. cells may be formulated in a variety of ways. They may be employed as wettable powders, granules or dusts, by mixing with various inert materials, such as inorganic minerals (phyllosilicates, carbonates, sulfates, phosphates, and the like) or botanical materials (powdered corncobs, rice hulls, walnut shells, and the like). The formulations may include spreader-sticker adjuvants, stabilizing agents, other pesticidal additives, or surfactants. Liquid formulations may be aqueous-based or non-aqueous and employed as foams, gels, suspensions, emulsifiable concentrates, or the like. The ingredients may include rheological agents, surfactants, emulsifiers, dispersants, or polymers.

The pesticidal concentration will vary widely depending upon the nature of the particular formulation, particularly whether it is a concentrate or to be used directly. The pesticide will be present in at least 1% by weight and may be 100% by weight. The dry formulations will have from about 1-95% by weight of the pesticide while the liquid formulations will generally be from about 1-60% by weight of the solids in the liquid phase. The formulations will generally have from about 10^2 to about 10^4 cells/mg. These formulations will be administered at about 50 mg (liquid or dry) to 1 kg or more per hectare.

The formulations can be applied to the environment of the lepidopteran pest(s), e.g., plants, soil or water, by spraying, dusting, sprinkling, or the like.

Mutants of PS81I can be made by procedures well known in the art. For example, an asporogenous mutant can be obtained through ethylmethane sulfonate (EMS) mutagenesis of PS81I. The mutants can be made using ultraviolet light and nitrosoguanidine by procedures well known in the art.

A smaller percentage of the asporogenous mutants will remain intact and not lyse for extended fermentation periods; these strains are designated lysis minus (–). Lysis minus strains can be identified by screening asporogenous mutants in shake flask media and selecting those mutants that are still intact and contain toxin crystals at the end of the fermentation. Lysis minus strains are suitable for a cell fixation process that will yield a protected, encapsulated toxin protein.

To prepare a phage resistant variant of said asporogenous mutant, an aliquot of the phage lysate is spread onto nutrient agar and allowed to dry. An aliquot of the phage sensitive bacterial strain is then plated directly over the dried lysate and allowed to dry. The plates are incubated at 30°C. The plates are incubated for 2 days and, at that time, numerous colonies could be seen growing on the agar. Some of these colonies are picked and subcultured onto nutrient agar plates. These apparent resistant cultures are tested for resistance by cross streaking with the phage lysate. A line of the phage lysate is streaked on the plate and allowed to dry. The presumptive resistant cultures are then streaked across the phage line. Resistant bacterial cultures show no lysis anywhere in the streak across the phage line after overnight incubation at 30°C. The resistance to phage is then reconfirmed by plating a lawn of the resistant culture onto a nutrient agar plate. The sensitive strain is also plated in the same manner to serve as the positive control. After drying, a drop of the phage lysate is plated in the center of the plate and allowed to dry. Resistant cultures showed no lysis in the area where the phage lysate has been placed after incubation at 30°C for 24 hours.

Following are examples which illustrate procedures, including the best mode, for practicing the invention. These examples should not be construed as limiting. All

percentages are by weight and all solvent mixture proportions are by volume unless otherwise noted.

Example 1 – Culturing *B.t.* PS81I

A subculture of B.t. PS81I, or mutants thereof, can be used to inoculate the following medium, a peptone, glucose, salts medium.

Bacto Peptone	7.5 g/l
Glucose	1.0 g/l
KH_2PO_4	3.4 g/l
K_2HPO_4	4.35 g/l
Salt Solution	5.0 ml/l
$CaCl_2$ Solution	5.0 ml/l

Salts Solution (100 ml)

$MgSO_4.7H_2O$	2.46 g
$MnSO_4.H_2O$	0.04 g
$ZnSO_4.7H_2O$	0.28 g
$FeSO_4.7H_2O$	0.40 g

$CaCl_2$ Solution (100 ml)

$CaCl_2.2H_2O$	3.66 g
pH 7.2	

The salts solution and $CaCl_2$ solution are filter-sterilized and added to the autoclaved and cooked broth at the time of inoculation. Flasks are incubated at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200 rpm for 64 hr.

The above procedure can be readily scaled up to large fermentors by procedures well known in the art.

The B.t. spores and/or crystals, obtained in the above fermentation, can be isolated by procedures well known in the art. A frequently-used procedure is to subject the harvested fermentation broth to separation techniques, e.g., centrifugation.

Example 2 – Cloning of Novel Toxin Genes From Isolate PS81I and Transformation into *Escherichia coli*

Total cellular DNA was prepared from B.t. cells grown to a low optical density (OD_{600} = 1.0). The cells were recovered by centrifugation and protoplasted in TES buffer (30 mM Tris-Cl, 10 mM ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid [EDTA], 50 mM NaCl, pH = 8.0) containing 20% sucrose and 50 mg/ml lysozyme. The protoplasts were lysed by addition of sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS) to a final concentration of 4%. The cellular material was precipitated overnight at 4°C in 100 mM (final concentration) neutral potassium chloride. The supernate was extracted twice with phenol/chloroform (1:1). The DNA was precipitated with ethanol and purified by isopycnic banding on a cesium gradient.

Total cellular DNA from PS81I and B.t.k. HD-1 was digested with EcoRI and separated by electrophoresis on a 0.8% (w/v) Agarose-TAE (50 mM Tris-Cl, 20 mM NaOAc, 2.5 mM EDTA, pH=8.0) buffered gel. A Southern blot of the gel was hybridized with a [^{32}P] radiolabeled probe against the 3.2 Kb NsiI to NsiI fragment of the toxin gene contained in plasmid pM3,130-7 of NRRL B-18332 and the 2.4 Kb NsiI to KpnI fragment of the "4.5 Kb class" toxin gene (Kronstad and Whitely [1986] Gene USA 43:29-40). These two fragments were combined and used as the probe. Results show that hybridizing fragments of PS81I are distinct from those of HD-1. Specifically, in the 1.5 Kb to 2.5 Kb size range, 2.3 Kb, 1.95 Kb, and 1.6 Kb hybridizing bands were detected in PS81I instead of the single 1.9 Kb hybridizing band in HD-1.

The following description outlines the steps taken in cloning two of the three EcoRI fragments described above. Two hundred micrograms of PS81I total cellular DNA was digested with EcoRI and separated by electrophoresis on a preparative 0.8% (w/v) Agarose-TAE gel. The 1.5 Kb to 2.3 Kb region of the gel was cut out and the DNA from it was electroeluted and concentrated using an ELUTIP™-d (Schleicher and Schuell, Keene, NH)

ion exchange column according to the manufacturer's specification. The isolated EcoRI fragments were ligated to LAMBDA ZAP™ EcoRI arms (Stratagene Cloning Systems, La Jolla, CA) and packaged using Gigapak GOLD™ (Stratagene) extracts. The packaged recombinant phage were plated with E. coli strain BB4 (Stratagene) to give high plaque density. The plaques were screened by standard nucleic acid hybridization procedures with radiolabeled probe. The plaques that hybridized were purified and re-screened at a lower plaque density. The resulting purified phage were grown with R408 M13 helper phage (Stratagene) and the recombinant BlueScript™ (Stratagene) plasmid was automatically excised and packaged. The "phagemid" was re-infected in XL1-Blue E. coli cells (Stratagene) as part of the automatic excision process. The infected XL1-Blue cells were screened for ampicillin resistance and the resulting colonies were analyzed by a standard rapid plasmid purification procedure to identify the desired plasmids. The plasmids, designated pM2,31-4 and pM2,31-1, contain approximately 1.95 Kb and 1.6 Kb EcoRI inserts, respectively. The DNA sequence of both inserts was determined using Stratagene's T7 and T3 oligonucleotide primers plus a set of existing internal B.t. endotoxin gene oligonucleotide primers. About 500 bp of the insert in pM2,31-4 was sequenced. In the same manner, approximately 1.0 Kb of the insert in pM2,31-1 was sequenced. Data analysis comparing the two sequences to other cloned and sequenced B.t. endotoxin genes showed that two distinct, unique partial toxin gene sequences had been found. Synthetic oligonucleotides were constructed to regions in both sequences that had minimum homology to other characterized B.t. endotoxin genes. The 42-mer oligonucleotide constructed to the sequence of the insert in pM2,31-4 was GGATACCGGTGACCCATTAACATTCCAATCT TTTAGTTACGC; it was used to isolate a toxin gene sequence called 81IA. The 40-mer oligonucleotide constructed to the sequence of the insert in pM2,31-1 was GAAGTTTATGG CCTCTTTCTGTAGAAAATCAAATTGGACC; it was used to isolate a toxin gene sequence called 81IB.

In order to clone both complete toxin genes, a Sau3A partial library was constructed. PS81I total cellular DNA partially digested with Sau3A and size fractionated by electrophoresis into a mixture of 9-23 Kb fragments on a 0.6% agarose-TAE gel, and

purified as described previously, was ligated into LambdaGEM-11™ (PROMEGA). The packaged phage were plated on P2392 E. coli cells (Stratagene) at a high titer and screened using the radiolabeled synthetic oligonucleotides (aforementioned) as nucleic acid hybridization probes. Hybridizing plaques, using each probe, were rescreened at a lower plaque density. Purified plaques that hybridized with either probe were used to infect P2392 E. coli cells in liquid culture for preparation of phage for DNA isolation. DNA was isolated by standard procedures. Preparative amounts of DNA were digested with SalI (to release the inserted DNA from lambda arms) and separated by electrophoresis on a 0.6% agarose-TAE gel. The large fragments, electroeluted and concentrated as described above, were ligated to SalI-digested and dephosphorylated pUC19 (NEB). The ligation mix was introduced by transformation into DH5(α) competent E. coli cells (BRL) and plated on LB agar containing ampicillin, isopropyl-(β)-D-thiogalactoside (IPTG), and 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-(β)-D-galactoside (XGAL). White colonies, with prospective insertions in the (β)-galactosidase gene of pUC19, were subjected to standard rapid plasmid purification procedures to isolate the desired plasmids. Plasmid pM3,122-1 contains a 15 Kb Sau3A fragment isolated using the 81IA oligonucleotide probe. Plasmid pM4,59-1 contains an 18 Kb Sau3A fragment isolated using the 81IB oligonucleotide probe.

Plasmid pM3,122-1 was digested with several restriction enzymes and Southern blotted. The blot was probed with the [^{32}P] radiolabeled 81IA specific oligonucleotide probe, as well as the labeled oligonucleotide sequencing primers made to known B.t.k. toxin genes. The resulting autoradiogram showed that two toxin genes were present in tandem on this cloned Sau3A fragment. Plasmid pM3,122-1 had a 4.0 Kb NdeI fragment that hybridized with oligonucleotide probes made to known B.t.k. genes. This fragment, however, did not hybridize with the specific oligonucleotides to 81IA or 81IB; a new toxin gene had been discovered and subsequently was called 81IA2. The 4.0 Kb NdeI fragment was isolated and cloned in pUC19, yielding plasmid pMYC392. The 81IA toxin gene was isolated by digesting pM3,122-1 with HindIII, with resulting deletion of most of the 81IA2 toxin gene. The fragment was recircularized to form pMYC1603. The 81IA toxin gene is unique based on its restriction map and its DNA sequence.

Plasmid pM4,59-1 was digested with several restriction enzymes and Southern blotted. The blot was probed with the [^{32}P] radiolabeled 81IB specific oligonucleotide probe, as well as with labeled oligonucleotide sequencing primers made to known B.t.k. toxin genes. The plasmid pM4,59-1 was mapped and found to contain only a partial 81IB toxin gene. The full open reading frame (ORF) of a second toxin gene was discovered on the 18 Kb fragment and called 81IB2. The 81IB2 toxin gene was cloned separately from the 81IB toxin gene by digestion of pM4,59-1 with NdeI and SmaI, filling in the NdeI overhang and ligating the linear fragment back together. The resulting plasmid was called pMYC394. The full ORF of the 81IB toxin gene was isolated from another Sau3A fragment, cloned from the lambda library, on a 7.3 Kb HindIII fragment in pBluescript (Stratagene). The resulting plasmid is pMYC393.

The toxin genes were sequenced by the standard Sanger dideoxy chain termination method using oligonucleotide primers made to the "4.5 Kb class" toxin gene and by "walking" with primers made to the sequences of the new toxin genes. Sequence analysis of the four toxin genes has elucidated unique open reading frames and has deduced unique endotoxin proteins. The following table summarizes the size of each ORF in base pairs and the deduced endotoxin molecular weight in daltons.

TOXIN GENE	ORF (bp)	DEDUCED MW (daltons)	SEQUENCES
81IA2	3537	133,367	SEQ ID NOs:1-2
81IB	3495	132,480	SEQ ID NOs:3-4
81IB2	3567	134,714	SEQ ID NOs:5-6
81IA	3716	133,621	SEQ ID NOs:7-8

Endotoxin proteins have been expressed in Pseudomonas and/or Bacillus from the toxin genes. SDS-PAGE/Western blot analysis, using polyclonal antibodies directed against the "6.6 Kb" class toxin, verified that each gene encodes an immunoreactive protein of approximately 130,000 daltons. The toxin proteins encoded by the genes of the subject invention expressed in either a Bacillus or Pseudomonas host have activity against all

lepidopteran insects tested: Trichoplusia ni, Spodoptera exigua, Plutella xylostella, and Choristoneura occidentalis.

The above cloning procedures were conducted using standard procedures unless otherwise noted.

The various methods employed in the preparation of the plasmids and transformation of host organisms are well known in the art. Also, methods for the use of lambda bacteriophage as a cloning vehicle, i.e., the preparation of lambda DNA, in vitro packaging, and transfection of recombinant DNA, are well known in the art. These procedures are all described in Maniatis, T., Fritsch, E.F., and Sambrook, J. (1982) Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York. Thus, it is within the skill of those in the genetic engineering art to extract DNA from microbial cells, perform restriction enzyme digestions, electrophorese DNA fragments, tail and anneal plasmid and insert DNA, ligate DNA, transform cells, prepare plasmid DNA, electrophorese proteins, and sequence DNA.

The restriction enzymes disclosed herein can be purchased from Bethesda Research Laboratories, Gaithersburg, MD, New England Biolabs, Beverly, MA, or Boehringer-Mannheim, Indianapolis, IN. The enzymes are used according to the instructions provided by the supplier.

The plasmids containing the B.t. toxin genes can be removed from the transformed host microbes by use of standard well-known procedures. For example, the host microbes can be subjected to cleared lysate isopycnic density gradient procedures, and the like, to recover the desired plasmid.

Example 3 – Insertion of Toxin Genes Into Plants

The novel genes coding for the novel insecticidal toxins, as disclosed herein, can be inserted into plant cells using the Ti plasmid from Agrobacter tumefaciens. Plant cells can then be caused to regenerate into plants (Zambryski, P., Joos, H., Gentello, C., Leemans, J., Van Montague, M. and Schell, J [1983] Cell 32:1033-1043). A particularly useful vector in this regard is pEND4K (Klee, H.J., Yanofsky, M.F. and Nester, E.W. [1985] Bio/Technology

3:637-642). This plasmid can replicate both in plant cells and in bacteria and has multiple cloning sites for passenger genes. The toxin gene, for example, can be inserted into the BamHI site of pEND4K, propagated in E. coli, and transformed into appropriate plant cells.

Example 4 – Cloning of Novel *B. thuringiensis* Genes Into Baculoviruses

The novel genes of the invention can be cloned into baculoviruses such as Autographa californica nuclear polyhedrosis virus (AcNPV). Plasmids can be constructed that contain the AcNPV genome cloned into a commercial cloning vector such as pUC8. The AcNPV genome is modified so that the coding region of the polyhedrin gene is removed and a unique cloning site for a passenger gene is placed directly behind the polyhedrin promoter. Examples of such vectors are pGP-B6874, described by Pennock et al. (Pennock, G.D., Shoemaker, C. and Miller, L.K. [1984] Mol. Cell. Biol. 4:399-406), and pAC380, described by Smith et al. (Smith, G.E., Summers, M.D. and Fraser, M.J. [1983] Mol Cell. Biol. 3:2156-2165). The gene coding for the novel protein toxin of the invention can be modified with BamHI linkers at appropriate regions both upstream and downstream from the coding region and inserted into the passenger site of one of the AcNPV vectors.

As disclosed previously, the nucleotide sequences encoding the novel B.t. toxin genes are shown in SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:7. The deduced amino acid sequences are shown in SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:6, and SEQ ID NO:8.

It is well known in the art that the amino acid sequence of a protein is determined by the nucleotide sequence of the DNA. Because of the redundancy of the genetic code, i.e., more than one coding nucleotide triplet (codon) can be used for most of the amino acids used to make proteins, different nucleotide sequences can code for a particular amino acid. Thus, the genetic code can be depicted as follows:

	Phenylalanine (Phe)	TTK	Histidine (His)	CAK
	Leucine (Leu)	XTY	Glutamine (Gln)	CAJ
	Isoleucine (Ile)	ATM	Asparagine (Asn)	AAK
	Methionine (Met)	ATG	Lysine (Lys)	AAJ
5	Valine (Val)	GTL	Aspartic acid (Asp)	GAK
	Serine (Ser)	QRS	Glutamic acid (Glu)	GAJ
	Proline (Pro)	CCL	Cysteine (Cys)	TGK
	Threonine (Thr)	ACL	Tryptophan (Trp)	TGG
	Alanine (Ala)	GCL	Arginine (Arg)	WGZ
10	Tyrosine (Tyr)	TAK	Glycine (Gly)	GGL
	Termination signal	TAJ		

Key: Each 3-letter deoxynucleotide triplet corresponds to a trinucleotide of mRNA, having a 5′-end on the left and a 3′-end on the right. All DNA sequences given herein are those of the strand whose sequence correspond to the mRNA sequence, with thymine substituted for
15 uracil. The letters stand for the purine or pyrimidine bases forming the deoxynucleotide sequence.

A = adenine

G = guanine

C = cytosine

20 T = thymine

X = T or C if Y is A or G

X = C if Y is C or T

Y = A, G, C or T if X is C

Y = A or G if X is T

25 W = C or A if Z is A or G

W = C if Z is C or T

Z = A, G, C or T if W is C

Z = A or G if W is A

QR = TC if S is A, G, C or T; alternatively

QR = AG if S is T or C

J = A or G

K = T or C

L = A, T, C or G

M = A, C or T

The above shows that the novel amino acid sequences of the B.t. toxins can be prepared by equivalent nucleotide sequences encoding the same amino acid sequence of the protein. Accordingly, the subject invention includes such equivalent nucleotide sequences. In addition it has been shown that proteins of identified structure and function may be constructed by changing the amino acid sequence if such changes do not alter the protein secondary structure (Kaiser, E.T. and Kezdy, F.J. [1984] Science 223:249-255). Thus, the subject invention includes mutants of the amino acid sequence depicted herein which do not alter the protein secondary structure, or if the structure is altered, the biological activity is retained to some degree.